Press Release: December 7, 2001 Contact: Scott Bascom, 802-828-5748

High Speed Rail Study Set to Begin

MONTPELIER - - The Vermont Agency of Transportation announced today it is initiating, in conjunction with the State of New Hampshire and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a study of the feasibility of implementing High Speed Rail service between Boston and Montreal.

The consulting firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. of Manchester, NH will provide engineering services for the study. Utilizing federal funds available for High Speed Rail corridors, Parsons Brinckerhoff will begin the process of evaluation and planning to determine the potential use of the passenger rail service.

In late 2000 the Boston to Montreal route was designated as one of the nation's three new High Speed Rail Corridors by the Federal Railroad Administration. High Speed Rail corridors have been established to facilitate planning for future transportation needs which will provide alternative travel modes for specific regions.

The principal objectives of High Speed Rail Service are to reduce congestion associated with highway and air travel and provide an alternative mode of travel. In the Boston to Montreal corridor, alternative rail service could reduce growing traffic concerns in the Boston metropolitan area and the I-93 and Route 3 corridors in northern Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The High Speed Rail service could also reduce growing traffic volumes for I-89 in Vermont and New Hampshire. In addition it would provide an alternative travel mode for airline travelers currently using Boston-Logan International, Manchester International, Burlington International or Montreal-Dorval airports which could mitigate anticipated future air travel congestion.

The length of the corridor is approximately 325 miles, roughly equal to the Northeast high speed rail corridor between Boston, MA and Philadelphia, PA. The proposed HSR corridor travels along existing rail rights-of-way from Boston, north to Nashua, NH and up through Manchester to Concord, then turns northwesterly following the former Boston & Maine, Northern Line from Concord to West Lebanon, NH. It crosses the Connecticut River into VT at White River Junction and travels northwesterly to Montpelier, Burlington and St. Albans, Vermont, linking with the Canadian National railroad at Alburg, VT, from Alburg, the line travels the final 65 miles to Central Station in Montreal, Quebec.

In addition to assessing the potential ridership, this Phase (Phase I of II) of the study will identify institutional and infrastructure issues including integration with existing passenger with freight operations, station selection criteria, and governmental considerations. A substantial public awareness effort will be part of the study. Public meetings will be arranged during the study to receive public comment and to provide updates on the status of study. In addition, a web site will be established to increase public access to project information. Phase I of the study is expected to be completed by September 2002.

For further information on the study please contact:

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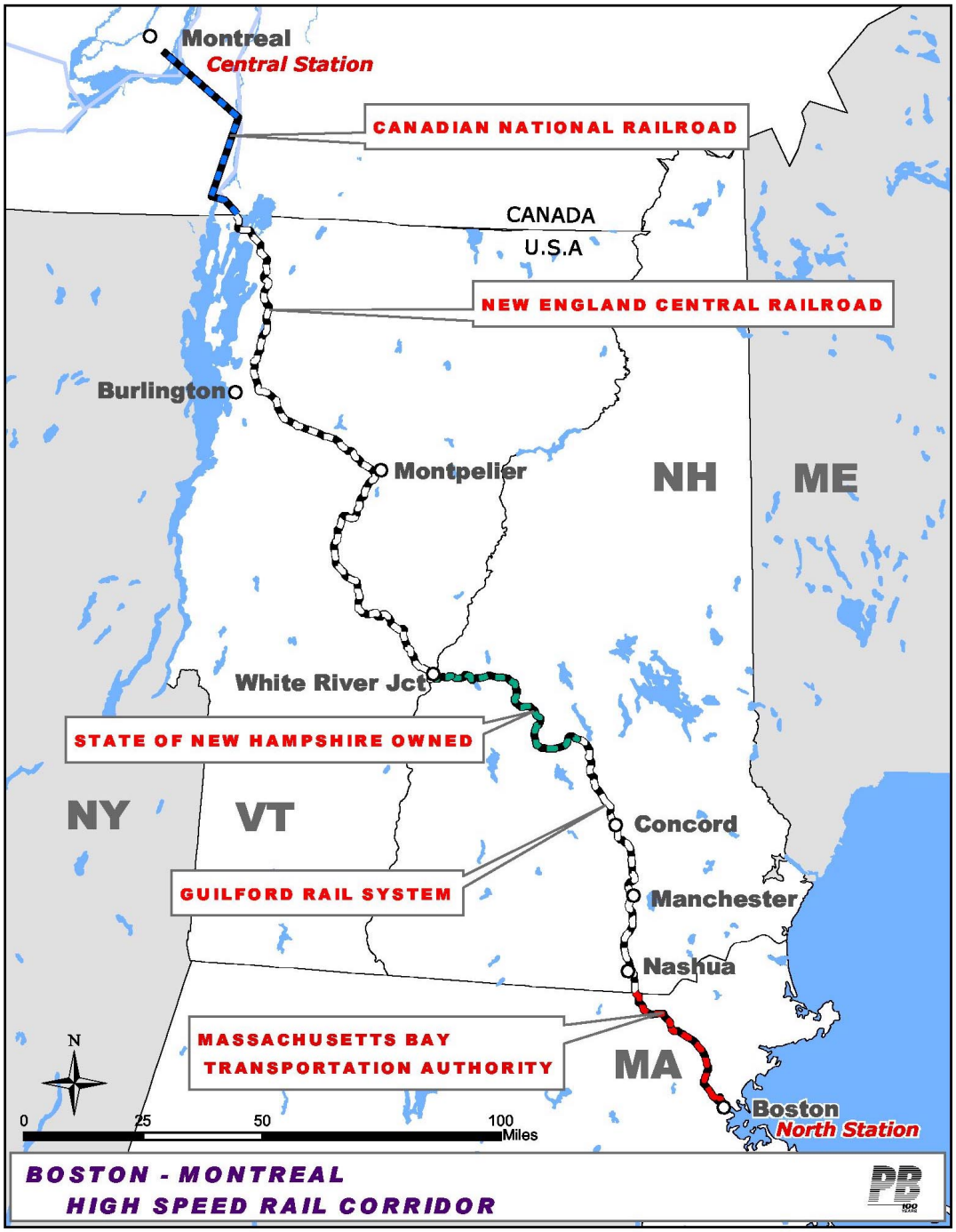
Montreal
Central Station
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD
CANADA
U.S.A
NEW ENGLAND CENTRAL RAILROAD
Burlington
Montpelier
NH
ME
White River Jct
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE OWNED
NY
VT
Concord
GUILFORD RAIL SYSTEM
Manchester
Nashua
MASSACHUSETTS BAY
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
MA
Boston
North Station
N
0
25
50
100
Miles
BOSTON - MONTREAL
HIGH SPEED RAIL CORRIDOR
PB